

CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
January 22, 2014 Minutes

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on January 22nd, 2014,
at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Denise Heap, Chair
Cheryl Anderson
Tony Liuzzo
Cliff Moon
Lu Ann Schmidt
Mark Tompert

MEMBERS ABSENT

Frank Johnson
Talmage Pearce

STAFF PRESENT

Andrea Arenas
Tracy Baca
Ruth Giese
Frank Hoglund
Anne McQuade
Justin Smothers
Paul Thomas
Ray Villa

GUESTS

Sandra Keierleber
Marrisa Ramirez-Ramos
David Shaw
Stephanie Sherwood

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Ms. Heap began the meeting at 6:00pm.

- Susan Lotz's Resignation.

2. Items from Citizens Present.*

Ms. Sherwood requested to speak regarding the City's support for employees during a gender transition process in the workplace. Ms. Sherwood is a Police Sergeant with the City of Mesa Police Department, working in the department for over 25 years. Ms. Sherwood is transgendered and began transitioning at her employment in September 2013. Ms. Sherwood explained that she met with appropriate staff to discuss the transition process starting in February 2013. Ms. Sherwood also met with the Chief of Police twice and commented that he was very receptive during their conversations. Ms. Sherwood stated that she provided research on the best practices for transitioning in the workplace, and with her superiors approval selected a date in which she would be presented as a female to other staff.

Ms. Sherwood explained the importance of management properly informing and explaining the process to staff as well as welcoming open lines communication in order to address questions and expel any rumors. Ms. Sherwood stated that management was recommended not to publicize the matter by legal staff therefore her co-workers were not adequately notified. Ms. Sherwood detailed how the lack of information actually created more hardships in the workplace.

Ms. Sherwood expressed that the city needs to adopt a policy, along the lines of the best practices, given that gender transition is becoming more prevalent in the workforce. Ms. Sherwood stated that having a policy and procedure in place will show support to any future employee wanting to go through a transition. Ms. Sherwood also recommended that the City of Mesa change their employee discrimination policy to included gender identity.

Ms. Heap advised that members of the audience may address the board on any item but State Statute prohibits HRAB from discussing items not listed on the agenda.

3. Approval of minutes from the December 4th, 2013 meeting.

Board members tabled this approval until more members are present.

4. Discuss and take action on Mesa Police Department Report.

- Presentation on sex-trafficking.

Lt. Hoglund and Sgt. Baca acknowledged that sex trafficking is occurring locally; therefore law enforcement is trying to promote awareness. Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where victims are exploited for commercial sex or labor purposes. Sex Trafficking is defined as: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age. Sex trafficking violations, listed under ARS 13-1307A, are a class 2 felony, whether there is intent to cause the other person to engage in any prostitution or sexually explicit performance by deception, force or coercion or there is knowledge that the other person will engage in any prostitution or sexually explicit performance by deception, coercion or force.

Lt. Hoglund and Sgt. Baca proceeded to advise on common misconceptions, inform of real-life occurrences and describe how law enforcement is looking at victims differently. Law enforcement is responding cases using a three-pronged approach: 1. Rescue the victim, refer the victim to services, and repair their dignity. 2. Aggressively investigate arrest and prosecute the trafficker. 3. Hold the end user and other affiliates equally responsible. Lt. Hoglund and Sgt. Baca concluded by encouraging board members to promote awareness of the subject and resources such as TRUSTaz.org, Sharedhope.org and the National Human Trafficking Resource Center.

Mr. Tompert questioned how much police resources are dedicated to investigating and preventing sex trafficking crimes. Lt. Hoglund stated that Mesa is just getting into the enforcement aspect as well as continuing to train staff on handling such cases. Lt. Hoglund stated that the Phoenix Police Department is the only state agency that has unit dedicated to sex trafficking but Mesa is participating in local task forces on the issue. Mr. Moon questioned if Mesa Public Schools has been contacted for a similar awareness presentation given that it is affecting minors. Lt. Hoglund stated that they plan on educating them in the future.

- Report on police related incidents and activities.

The Police Department will be participating in the Regional Unity Walk in Tempe on February 1st, 2014, and will have a recruitment booth at the Vietnamese Spring Festival on February 8th, 2014 at Dobson High School. On February 11th, 2014 the Police Department will be giving a presentation on domestic violence at the Southern Baptist Church, 851 N. Stapley, at the request of the community. The presentation will be given in both English and Spanish.

The MPD Diversity team was involved in the Martin Luther King, Jr. and will be participating in the Phoenix Pride Parade. MPD is also offering a three part transgender webinar training.

- Updates and scheduling of upcoming Police Advisory Board meetings.

The Senior Advisory Board is scheduled to meet on January 27th, 2014 at 9:30am at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center. The Asian Community Advisory Board will also be meeting on February 18th, 2014 at 5:30pm at Dobson Pediatrics Center.

5. Hear a presentation and discuss new protocol for diverting defendants with mental health issues, veterans and the homeless from court administrators.

Mr. Thomas and Ms. McQuade, Court Administrators for the City of Mesa, presented a new protocol for diverting defendants with mental health issues, veterans and homeless. Mr. Thomas stated that in the new protocol they plan to identify all of the available services pertaining to these issues and make them accessible to judges when working with defendants. This approach is more clinical as they are not separating defendants but associating the appropriate services best suited for that individual. For example, a homeless veteran may also have mental health concerns requiring multiple services. This approach is broader but felt to be more effective long term.

The goal of the program is early response. They will do so by being more proactive at the time of arrest. The Court's Program Assistant will check all defendants arrested and placed in the Mesa jail for an active case with Magellan prior to their initial appearance in front of a judge. The average has been 3-4 defendants per day with active cases. This information is given to the jail staff, judge, public defenders and prosecutors in order to provide an opportunity to contact the case worker for more information. Upon agreement of all the participants, some cases are not pursued through the criminal justice system but rather diverted back to the necessary counseling or mental health referral service.

Secondarily, defendants on pending cases that exhibit mental health issues, or may be too incompetent to stand trial, are evaluated at the court within thirty days. This process requires defendants to return to the court to be evaluated by a psychiatrist on Wednesdays (that day designated for evaluations), which has reduced the "no show" rate from 40% to less than 10%. Pre-trial dates are also altered after the evaluations so the results and recommendations can be considered. Ms. McQuade noted that tools have been set up so the psychiatrist is able to complete the evaluation form and print it off the same day for court consideration. Mr. Thomas made note of some of the key services such as Magellan, Maricopa County's contracted service provider for psychiatric services, and Human Services Campus located in downtown Phoenix for homeless resources. For veterans' services, Mesa, Tempe and Chandler Courts are forming a regional Veterans Court to connect veterans with tailored services and V.A. benefits.

Ms. Heap questioned what HRAB can do to assist or promote their efforts. In response, Mr. Thomas noted that they are early in the development of the program but they would like to present an update at a later time. Mr. Thomas stated that city management and councilmembers has been very receptive and supportive of the program. There may come a time when more resources or funding may be needed to continue or enhance the program therefore they would like to keep HRAB informed. Mr. Liuzzo questioned if there are estimations of cost to permanently implement all of the changes. Mr. Thomas stated they are not at a point where they are seeing a lot of costs given that they are trying to exhaust all available resources first. However, critical costs may be identified as they move further into the program.

Ms. Anderson questioned if considerations have been made for the transition of contracted services from Magellan to Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care occurring at the end of March. Mr. Thomas stated that they have not begun collaborations with the new provider, but they plan to approach them with the same model once the transition occurs. Ms. Anderson also suggested the use of peer specialists, an evidence based practice. Mr. Thomas thanked Ms. Anderson for the suggestion and stated they will continue to enhance their model.

6. Hear a presentation and discuss City of Mesa's annual ADA report from the Diversity Office.

Ms. Giese advised that she is the ADA representative for the City of Mesa. For reporting purposes, Ms. Giese keeps track of all ADA related calls that come in. If a call is received regarding a city facility or program, she will contact the appropriate department manager to have the issue addressed. Ms. Giese has not received a complaint to date pertaining to a city facility or program. All other calls are typically from people wanting to know their rights or where to report a situation. Common complaints are no wheelchair or restroom accessibility at restaurants or insufficient handicap parking at apartments. To date, Ms. Giese has received 30 similar calls.

Such complaints are referred the Attorney General's Office to file a discriminatory complaint. Ms. Giese stated that in most cases, the facilities are not aware of the regulations they need to be in keeping with. The Diversity Office has a list of ADA resources available on the City of Mesa webpage.

7. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Issues Research and Action Team.

- Provide update on the collaboration with Morrison Institute on the community survey.
- Report on the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Community Conversation on Discrimination series.
- Report on the speaker's bureau.
- Participation in Phoenix Pride Parade to be held on April 5th, 2014.

Board members tabled this discussion until more members are present.

8. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Disabilities Action Team.

- Update on education event for service animals.
- Report on ways of educating the community on mental health issues.

Board members tabled this discussion until more members are present.

9. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Youth Diversity Education Team.

- Report on educating youth through the Cinema Series project.
- Report on interactive blog on diversity.

Board members tabled this discussion until more members are present.

10. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Veterans Task Force.

Board members tabled this discussion until more members are present.

11. Discuss and take action on the replacement of Vice Chair for 2013/2014.

Board members tabled this discussion until more members are present.

12. Hear and discuss conferences and/or meetings.

- Report on Mesa Police Department's webinar training on best practices for dealing with gender identity in the workplace held January 16th, 2014.

Ms. Heap noted that Mr. Villa already announced the training, but there are two additional viewings on February 5th, 2014 and February 19th, 2014 at 9am at the Chief's conference room at the Central Police Station.

- Report on workshop on the Equality Index held on January 17th, 2014.

Ms. Heap stated that she was unable to attend this meeting, but it was regarding the MEI Report from the Human Rights Campaign. Mesa scored a 41, Phoenix scored a 100. Ms. Heap noted that this

report is important for all populations given that it is the only comprehensive study on Municipalities and Businesses regarding equality and how the community responds to diversity.

- Report on update from the General Plan Committee.

Ms. Heap advised that there has been two meeting in January. Ms. Heap complemented the committee for going beyond the 'nuts and bolts' of a city and including elements of diversity in economic development and employment in the General Plan. The attitude taken when formulating this General Plan was open to looking how to make the city livable as well as inviting to all groups of people.

13. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

- Regional Unity Walk to be held on February 1st, 2014 at 10am at Tempe Beach Park Amphitheater.
- Regional HRC meeting to be held on February 11th, 2014 at 5:30pm on the 2nd floor of the Tempe Transportation building, 200 East Fifth Street, Tempe, 85281.
- Next meeting will be held on February 26th, 2014 at 6pm.

14. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:28pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator